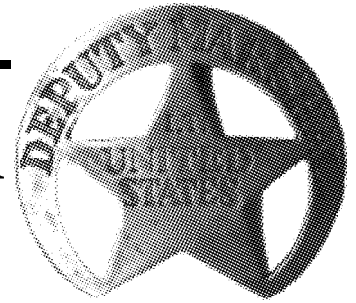


The Dispatch

The Newsletter of Fort Smith National Historic Site



Winter, 2000 Vol. 1 No. 2

New and Noteworthy

Park Grounds & Temporary Visitor Center Closed

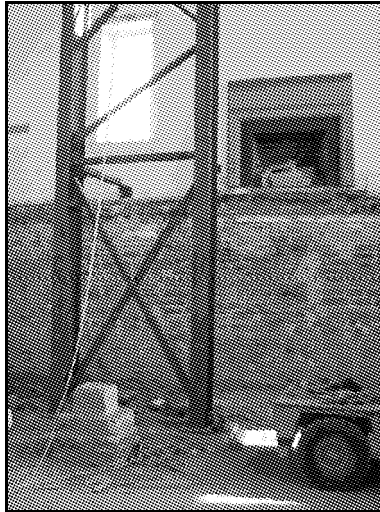
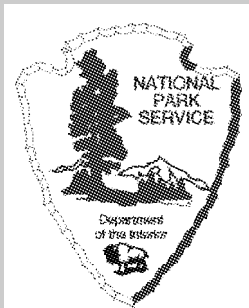
Due to the ongoing Phase 3 landscape work, the park grounds and temporary Visitor Center located at Third and Parker have been closed. Efforts are underway to move some exhibits and the orientation video will be moved to the city's Visitor Center (Miss Laura's) until the re-opening. Please contact the park for further details, or to schedule an off-site program.

New Park Ranger

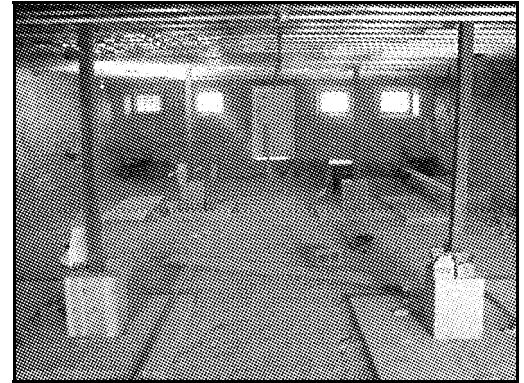
Julie Northrip, former director of the Ft. Smith Art Center, was selected to join the staff effective February 6. Julie's duties initially will include public relations connected with the grand opening in May.

Deputy list to be put on web-site

In February, the park's database of Deputy Marshals will be added to the park website. The majority of the database information was compiled by former Park Historian Julie Galonska. We expect this to be of real value to researchers and genealogists.



View of the courtroom and first jail with temporary framing in place; October 1999.



First Jail with new ceiling; January 2000.

Back together again:

Renovation work in the Courthouse continues, with the Grand Opening scheduled for June 24.

Phase three landscaping began January 21

As work nears completion inside the barracks / courthouse building, the last phase of the renovation project is just about to get started. Phase three consists of landscaping work to restore more of the historic landscape and environment of the fort. Three and a half blocks of streets will be closed and removed in order to outline the location of the wall around the post. The locations of the officer's quarters and the guardhouse will also be marked, and the main parking lot will be redesigned.

Crawford Construction of Fort Smith was awarded the \$893,500 landscaping contract on January 11. Crawford also did the work for phases one and two. A preconstruction meeting between the contractor and the Denver Service Center architects was held January 19. A three block section of Third street was closed for removal on Jan. 21, and work has begun in the parking lot.

The landscaping work is expected to take approximately 110 days and be completed early in the summer.

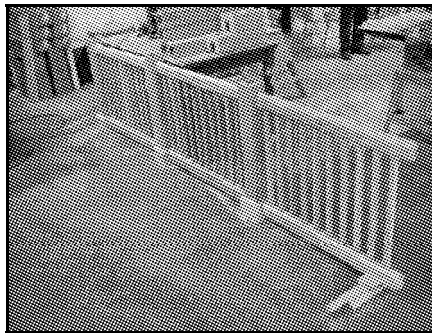
Superintendent's Column

Although we have fought the rumor for the last year that we are closed, as of January 24, for all intents and purposes we will be closed to the public. The contractor will be working on the parking lot and the city streets that are to be removed and for safety purposes the visitor center, gallows, commissary and park grounds will need to be closed. With Kelly Park under construction on the north end of the park, it will be difficult for the visitors to enjoy this area for the next several months. We are sorry for the inconvenience but we hope the public will see the benefits when we reopen later this spring.

With all the construction and preparation for moving and a grand opening, it is sometimes easy to forget that we also deal with the normal day to day operations of the park. We have brought all the cannons and the wagon inside for the winter to get them painted and ready for what we hope is an extremely busy summer. We are completing the Trail of Tears exhibits along the river and hope to unveil them during the grand opening in May. The trees are being pruned and fertilized and we are trying to salvage a few from the parking lot that are scheduled to be removed during the construction. We have received funding for a number of additional projects including an extension to the maintenance building and emergency exits in the upstairs offices. On the personnel front, new employees include Julie Northrip, and Bambi Hamilton, who has completed her course work at the Indian Votech and will join the maintenance staff as a new permanent employee shortly. Brian Vick from Van Buren is a new volunteer assisting the rangers a couple of days a week. The budget news for next year is a little disappointing so

far. We had hoped for a base increase to assist us in operating the new building and adding staff. This funding now appears to be in jeopardy which means we will definitely have to pull in the belt for next year; delaying filling our historian and other positions and cutting back on all operations.

Bill Black



The new railing for the courtroom under construction in the park's shop. The park maintenance staff are involved with much of the construction work.

2000 Winter / Spring Schedule Highlights

April 3-14 -
NPS Blackpowder training to be held at Fort Chaffee. This program is co-sponsored by the park, and NPS employees will be coming from all over the country to attend.

June 24 - 10:30 a.m.
Reopening and dedication of barracks / courthouse / jail building.
Dedication of the Trail of Tears overlook.

A Note from Julie

Greetings from the Cuyahoga Valley!

Two months after leaving the National Historic Site in Fort Smith, I'm still unpacking boxes and getting settled into life in Ohio. It's quite a change from residing on the balmy banks of the Arkansas for so many years.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the park and the community of Fort Smith for the wealth of opportunities presented to me during my time as historian and leader of the interpretive division at the Historic Site. My experience was truly rich and rewarding. From my involvement in park and community projects to teaching at Westark and UALR, I was privileged to meet some incredibly gifted, generous and unique individuals. Most of all, I am indebted to Superintendent Bill Black for his willingness to offer a young graduate student a chance and for his guidance, faith and trust over the years.

Fort Smith NHS is now entering one of its most exciting times. In many ways, I regret that I am not there to share that experience with you, but I have no doubt that the park staff will continue its tremendous work. As for myself, the history of Fort Smith has gotten into my blood and I persist with research and writing on topics of interest. Maybe that book finally will get finished!

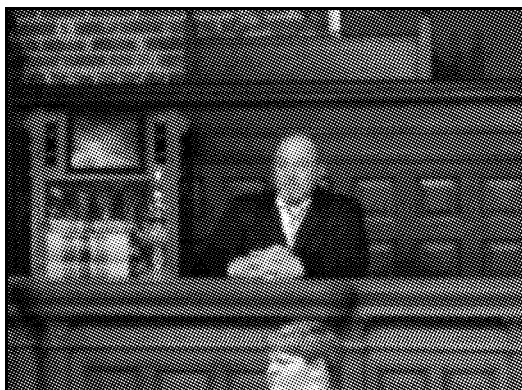
Again, thank you for making my time in Fort Smith special. I hope to see you at the grand opening.

Julie Galonska

Fall Events and School Programs

October was a busy month for the Interpretive staff at Fort Smith NHS. Early in the month volunteers and staff helped dedicate the new Boy Scout facilities near Booneville with a cannon-firing program. The weekend of October 23-24 was the Valley of the Arkansas Gathering. Fort Smith NHS hosted Civil War and Deputy U.S. Marshal encampments, and provided a guided time-line that traced Fort Smith history from 1817 till 1900. On Friday, reserved tours for schools resulted in over 500 students going through the time-line. Visitation for the whole weekend was approximately 2500.

In addition, the months of September, October, and November saw 875 students participate in the Living the Legacy program. Living the Legacy is a curriculum-based program where students become soldiers or deputy marshals for a day. Interpretive staff in period clothing demonstrate black powder weapons and equipment, conduct tours, and relate important information concerning Fort Smith's role in American History. Students in October had the special treat of a talk given by Bill Hunt of the Midwest Archeological Center. Mr. Hunt was conducting a survey and assessment of the 2nd fort wall using ground penetrating radar.



Park volunteer Harold Blaine interpreting Judge Parker for fall educational programs. The Fort Smith Museum of History has allowed us to use the courtroom display for educational programs throughout the year.

Newsletter now available online and via email

The Dispatch newsletter can now be downloaded from the park's website. As part of an effort to make publications such as the newsletter and site bulletins available through the internet, the newsletter is available as an Adobe Acrobat .pdf file. The website address for the newsletter is:

<http://www.nps.gov/fosm/park/dispatch/>

If you would be interested in being added to our mailing list to receive future issues of the newsletter through email, please contact the park.

Notes on Fort Smith History

February 26, 1822

Colonel Mathew Arbuckle and a detachment of the 7th Infantry arrived at Fort Smith. Col. Arbuckle relieved Major Bradford of command and carried out orders to reassign the members of the Rifle Regiment to the 7th.

February 7, 1838

The Senate adopted a resolution for a report by the Secretary of War as to whether a site had been selected for a new fort on the western border of Arkansas. If no site had been selected, the Senate wanted to know why. Congressional support for the new post went against the advice of the Army which saw no reason for a post in or near Arkansas.

June 24, 1846

Lt. Edward Johnson, Post Commissary, reports that the "New Commissary Store is completed -- it is a very commodious and suitable building." The completion of the commissary was one of the last construction details prior to the official occupation of the second fort later that spring.

March 19, 1888

Marshal Carroll transfers all prisoners to the new jail after a mass escape attempt from the first jail two days earlier. The basement rooms of the first jail are then used for storage.

<p>The Dispatch <i>The newsletter of Fort Smith NHS</i></p>	<p>An Officer at the Second Fort Smith: Samuel Sturgis <i>Submitted by Park Ranger Tom Wing</i></p>
<p>Fort Smith National Historic Site PO Box 1406 Fort Smith, AR 72902 (501) 783-3961 http://www.nps.gov/fosm/</p>	<p>Samuel Davis Sturgis was born at Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, on June 11, 1822. In July of 1842 he entered West Point and graduated thirty-second in his class of 1846.</p>
<p>IN THIS ISSUE:</p> <p>Renovation Update 1</p> <p>Superintendent's Column 2</p> <p>Upcoming events Schedule 2</p> <p>A note from Julie 2</p> <p>Fall Events and Programs 3</p> <p>Notes on Fort Smith History 3</p>	<p>While on assignment in Fort Smith Arkansas in April of 1861, Captain Sturgis received orders to evacuate the post and take the two companies under his command to Indian Territory. In a letter to the Assistant Adjutant General of the Department of the West, Sturgis described the situation at Fort Smith, "After supplies were cut off by the State of Arkansas, the post of course became untenable and we could have occupied it in any case but a few more days. One hour after we left, two boats arrived with three hundred men and ten pieces of artillery. To have contended against this force with two companies of cavalry, and that too while the entire population of the surrounding country were ready at a moments notice to take up arms against us, could only have resulted eventually in our being taken prisoners and the loss to the government of all the arms, horses, means of transportation &c, at the post."</p> <p>During the course of the Civil War, Sturgis achieved the rank of Major General. After the war, Sturgis went back to his regular rank of lieutenant colonel. He was promoted to colonel and transferred to the Seventh Cavalry in 1869. Sturgis' oldest son, James, was a Second Lieutenant in the Seventh Cavalry and died in battle with Custer at the Little Big Horn.</p> <p>Sturgis retired in 1886 and died September 28, 1889 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.</p>

Fort Smith National Historic Site
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